

**Draft  
Environmental Assessment**

**Travelers' Rest State Park,  
Holt Building Lease**

**April 2009**



***Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks***

# **Environmental Assessment MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

## **PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

1. **Proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to enter into a 5-year lease agreement with current owners for the 10,400 sq.ft. building adjacent to Travelers' Rest State Park and the 1.27 acres the building occupies. Leasing this building would allow FWP to create parks administrative offices in order to establish a local presence in the Bitterroot Valley to oversee the day-to-day management for both Travelers' Rest and Fort Owen State Parks.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:**  
FWP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per 23-2-101 Montana Code Annotated (MCA). State statute 87-1-209 provides the department with the authority to purchase lands for state parks and outdoor recreation.  
  
Furthermore, state statute 23-1-110 MCA and the Administrative Rules of Montana 12.2.433 guide public involvement and comment for the improvements at state parks and fishing access sites, which this document provides.  
  
Administrative Rule 12.8.602 (AKA House Bill 495) requires the Department to consider the wishes of users and the public, the capacity of the site for development, environmental impacts, long-range maintenance, protection of natural features and impacts on tourism as these elements relate to development or improvement to fishing access sites or state parks.
3. **Name of project:** Travelers' Rest State Park, Holt Building Lease
4. **Project sponsor:**  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
406-542-5500
5. **Estimated Schedule of Events:**  
Public Comment Period: Late April – Mid May 2009  
Decision Notice Published: Late May 2009  
FWP Commission Final Approval: June 18, 2009
6. **Location:** Missoula County, T21N, R20W, Section 34, SE1/4 NE1/4. Travelers' Rest State Park is approximately 8 miles south of Missoula, located off US Highway 12 near its intersection with US Highway 93.



7. Project size:

	<u><b>Acres</b></u>		<u><b>Acres</b></u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain/Riparian	<u>0</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>1.27</u>	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/	<u>0</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands Areas	<u>0</u>	Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other	<u>0</u>

## 8. Permits, Funding, and Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction.

(a) **Permits:** None

(b) **Funding:**

Final terms of the lease agreement are still being negotiated. However, the building owners and FWP have tentatively agreed to the following terms:

- 5-year lease agreement.
- Lease payment not to exceed \$60,000 per year, which will be renegotiated after 2 years.
- FWP has exclusive use of the building with the Holts retaining the ability to show their collection within it with prior approval from FWP.
- Any revenue collected by FWP from the use of the building belongs to FWP.
- FWP accepts responsibility for weed management within the 1.27 acres and utility costs from the building.

(c) **Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

None

## 9. Summary of the proposed action:

### Preface

Travelers' Rest State Park is a key Lewis and Clark Expedition and Native American historical and archeological site located in the unincorporated town of Lolo, Montana. The Lolo area has been a crossroads of travel, culture, and commerce for hundreds of years.

It is known that Native Americans, beginning about 8,000 years ago, used the site of the park and areas nearby for hunting and gathering spots. It was a trail junction used by the Nez Perce to reach eastern buffalo country. Additionally, the Salish peoples lived and hunted in the Bitterroot valley for centuries.

Not surprisingly then, a Shoshone guide led the Lewis and Clark expedition to the area to rest before continuing on their search west for the Northwest Passage. The expedition spent a week on two separate occasions along the creek and named the site "Travellers Rest Creek". Their first visit was in September of 1805 and then again in late June and early July of 1806.

In 2001, the first portion of the state park was donated to FWP to begin encompassing the important historic and culturally significant area. In summer 2002, archeologists found evidence of the Corps of Discovery's (Lewis and Clark expedition's) latrine and central fire, positioning the Park as one of the the few sites in the nation with physical confirmation of the group's visit.

Travelers' Rest has been recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service, and has received the prestigious "Saving America's Treasures" designation. In 2006, the US Department of Interior moved the boundaries of the Travelers' Rest National Historic Landmark to Travelers' Rest State Park.

Since its inception, local residents, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes, and local and county governments have supported Travelers' Rest. One of the most obvious collaborative efforts in support of the park is the unique management agreement between FWP and the non-profit Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association (TRPHA). The state park is owned by FWP, however, the day-to-day management and operations of the park are the responsibility of TRPHA. Because of this arrangement, TRPHA has the ability to develop additional partnerships with federal agencies, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and others for support of the organization's educational and interpretive activities at Travelers' Rest.

### Need and Benefits

Travelers' Rest State Park encompasses a mixture of grasslands and cottonwood galleries with native shrubbery growing along Lolo Creek's floodplain. The site hosts numerous Lewis and Clark reenactments and historic presentations that incorporate the interpretation of natural and cultural aspects of the site. Since visitor data collection started in 2004, the park has seen a steady increase in visitor traffic. In 2008, Travelers' Rest received 16,500 visitors and of those, approximately 3,400 were local school children.

Presently, the visitor center is housed in a 30' yurt (approximately 700 sq. ft.), which has provided accommodations for the visitor center desk, interpretive area, retail merchandise, and presentations. During peak programs, the yurt is too small to accommodate large groups of people and still provide space for an open reception area.

On a 1.27-acre site adjacent to the State Park, the Holts built the 10,400 sq. ft. building, included in the proposed lease agreement, to house a portion of their heritage collection. This building is not open to the public. The Holt collection focuses on Native Americans, Lewis and Clark and the history of logging in Western Montana as it all relates to Travelers' Rest State Park.

During the past two winters, the park has offered an educational and interpretive storytelling series about the history and cultural resources of the site. In 2008, these programs were conducted in the 30' yurt and the average attendance for these presentations was 30 people. Now in 2009, the Holts have allowed this series to be housed in their building and attendance is averaging around 70 attendees. Staff partially attributes this increase to having the presentations in the heated building.

The opportunity for FWP to lease this building would allow FWP to establish a dedicated visitor reception area with a small retail space, separate park administration offices, a dedicated presentation area that can accommodate 100 participants and manage the museum. Besides the new visitor center space and office space, under FWP management, the museum would be open to the public, which would provide additional tourism and recreational opportunities for the public. With these changes, the yurt could be used for educational programs presented by the TRPHA staff and volunteers.

In addition to improvements to the facilities available to FWP and the public under the lease, the creation of FWP parks administrative offices would assist FWP in establishing a local presence in the Bitterroot Valley to oversee the day-to-day management of both Travelers' Rest and Fort Owen State Parks. Fort Owen is located approximately 15 miles south of Travelers' Rest along Highway 93 and preserves the remains of the first white settlement in Montana. Fort Owen was used as a regional trading post in the 1850s and its remaining adobe and log buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Supervision of both parks is currently administered from FWP's regional headquarters in Missoula.

## **10. Alternatives:**

### **Alternative A: No Action.**

If FWP declines the opportunity to lease the building for office space, a visitor center and museum adjacent to Travelers' Rest State Park, the Holts will continue to operate their museum as they are now, which is currently closed to the public except by appointment.

### **Alternative B: For FWP to enter into a 5-year lease for the building and its land adjacent to Travelers' Rest State Park.**

The lease of the building would provide FWP with enough space for a formal visitor center for Travelers' Rest State Park and an administration office. The lease would also transfer the day-to-day management of the building and its heritage collection from the Holts to FWP, which will allow the collection to be viewed by the public during the normal hours of operation of the park.

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST**

The analysis of the physical and human environments discussed on the following pages is limited to Alternative B. The reason for this is because the potential impacts of Alternative A are difficult to define since the final decision regarding the management of the building is left to the discretion of the Holts.

However, if the lease agreement is not implemented, FWP would continue to work with TRPHA for the day-to-day management of the state park, as well as continue to provide financial support for the operations and maintenance of the park.

### **Evaluation of the impacts:**

#### **A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

1. <b><u>LAND RESOURCES</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

1a/c. The proposed lease agreement will have no effect on existing soil patterns, geologic features or geological substructures.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)		X				2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations? (Also see 2a.)		N/A				

2a. The proposed lease agreement will have no effect on ambient air quality.

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\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		N/A				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		N/A				

The proposed lease agreement will have no effect on surface water, drainage patterns, or floodwater routes. The acreage contains no waterways and is not included in the Lolo Creek floodplain (FEMA floodplain map # 63C1265D).

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\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. <b>VEGETATION</b>  Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X			yes	4e
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				

4c. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's (MNHP) species of concern database found no vascular or non-vascular plants within the boundaries of the property to be leased.

4e. Currently, the property has a limited infestation of leafy spurge and spotted knapweed. The proposed lease agreement could lead to the additional spread of noxious weeds on the property and within the park. If the lease were approved, FWP would initiate its 2008 Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan to control the noxious weeds on the property by chemical, mechanical, and biological methods.

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\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

<b>** 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		N/A				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		N/A				

5. The proposed lease agreement is not expected to impact any of the wildlife species known to use or move through the Holt property. Kristi DuBois, FWP Region 2 Non-Game Wildlife Biologist, made this assessment.

5f. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage database revealed three Montana species of concern in vicinity of target property. They are the grey wolf, A millipede, and Lewis woodpecker. Based on the species distribution information in the database, the Holt property lies in the general distribution area for both the wolf and millipede. Neither species has been seen near the park.

The Lewis woodpecker was named by Captain Lewis during one of the expedition's visits in 1805 and 1806. Its distribution is very specific to the cottonwood gallery within Travelers' Rest State Park and a small zone extending through the Holt property.

Other game and non-game species known to use the Holt property and move through Travelers' Rest include: white-tailed and mule deer, black bear, red fox, and over 100 species of birds (hawks, bluebirds, killdeer, osprey, etc.). An active bald eagle nest exists 2 miles north of Lolo and bald eagles are known to use the Lolo Creek corridor as a wintering area.

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\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				

The proposed lease agreement will not change the existing noise levels within and around the property.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				

The proposed lease agreement of the Holt property for the expansion of Travelers' Rest State Park will not conflict with the existing undeveloped nature of the rest of the state park nor will it clash with any area of scientific or educational importance.

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\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		yes	8a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		N/A				

- 8a. Chemical spraying is used as part of FWP's Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan to limit the infestation of noxious weeds on their properties. Only a trained licensed professional would conduct weed treatment and storage and mixing of the chemicals would be in accordance with standard operating procedures.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				

The lease agreement for visitor center and office space in the building will provide FWP the opportunity to establish a local presence within the Lolo Valley for the management of both Travelers' Rest and Fort Owen State Parks. The project has the potential to positively impact the local tourism and recreation industry economy.

\* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <b><u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				10b
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f

- 10b. There would be no change in the amount of property taxes paid by the owners to Missoula County if the proposed lease agreement were approved.
- 10d. If FWP assumes management of the building and extends its hours of operation, the use of electricity will likely increase when compared with current usage levels.
- 10e. Currently, no fees are charged for visitors to enter the museum. FWP anticipates establishing a new fee of \$3-\$4 per person to the museum portion of the building if the lease agreement were approved. Based on visitation data from 2008 and from an estimation that 25% of those visitors would be interested in touring the museum (excluding organized groups like schoolchildren), the museum fees could generate approximately \$9,800-\$13,000 in revenue to support educational programs and cover maintenance at the park.
- 10f. FWP anticipates the ongoing operations and maintenance for the entire park, including the addition of the building and associated acreage, will be approximately \$20, 000 - \$30,000 annually, excluding any personnel costs if additional FWP staff were to be hired. The costs cover weed control within the park and leased property, costs of the building lease, and the utility expenses related to building.

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\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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<b>** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)		X				11c
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		N/A				

- 11c. The proposed lease agreement could affect the aesthetic value of the Holt property and/or Travelers' Rest State Park. FWP's assumption of the management of the building potentially could expand the educational activities hosted at the park and the public's opportunity to view the Native American and historic and cultural collections within the building. See *Appendix B* for Tourism Report.

<b>12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u></b>  <b>Will the proposed action result in:</b>	<b>IMPACT *</b>					
	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Potentially Significant</b>	<b>Can Impact Be Mitigated</b>	<b>Comment Index</b>
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		N/A				

- 12a. The proposed action will not alter cultural or historic resources within the property. FWP's Heritage Resources Program Manager will work with park staff to ensure the Holt's collection housed in the museum portion of the building is treated with care and respect.

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\*\* Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		N/A				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		N/A				

The proposed action is expected to have minimal impacts to the physical and human environment. No public controversy is anticipated if FWP were to engage in the lease agreement for the use and management of the Holt's building and the heritage collection housed within it. Overall, the community has been very supportive of FWP's and the Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association's educational and historic programs on the site's Lewis and Clark and Native American histories.

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\*\*\* Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

\*\*\*\* Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.



**2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

State pesticide use laws and regulations will be followed. Application records will be submitted to the Montana Department of Agriculture as required and these records will be available to state investigators upon request.

**PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

The proposed building lease adjacent to Travelers' Rest State Park would provide FWP with an opportunity to establish a dedicated visitor reception area, manage a museum, as well as provide an indoor presentation area and administration offices for FWP and volunteer staff. In addition to the new indoor space, the yurt can be fully committed as venue for additional educational classes and presentations.

If approved, the new administrative office will allow FWP to establish a more visible presence in the Lolo community while providing management oversight of Travelers' Rest and Fort Owen State Parks. The Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association will still be involved with the educational and interpretive operations of the park as they have over the past 8 years.

The minor impacts that were identified if Alternative B (the building lease) were to be initiated, are small in scale and would not influence the daily operations of the park, nor greatly impact the human or natural environment of the immediate area. The proposed action is not expected to have any negative cumulative effects on the physical and human environments.

Furthermore, the lease agreement is expected to have positive long-term effects on the park, its visitors, and the community of Lolo by providing year-round access to a portion of the Holt's collection of historic artifacts and through an increase of recreation and tourism activities hosted at Travelers' Rest.

A possible secondary effect of the lease agreement and the management of the building with a portion of the Holt's heritage collection by FWP is the need to hire an additional staff person as curator and/or a local parks manager for supervision of the Holt's collection in the museum and the administration of the programs offered at the two local state parks.

**PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**1. Public Involvement:**

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Public legal notices in each of these papers: *Missoulian*, *Helena Independent Record*, and *Ravalli Republic*;
- One statewide press release;
- Direct mailing to adjacent landowners and interested parties;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.

Copies will be available for public review at FWP Region 2 Headquarters.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few limited physical and human impacts.

**2. Duration of comment period.**

The public comment period will extend for (21) twenty-one days following the publication of the legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., May 12, 2009, and can be mailed to the address below:

Travelers' Rest State Park, Holt Building Lease  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
Phone 406-542-5500

Or email comments to: [lbastian@mt.gov](mailto:lbastian@mt.gov)

**PART V. EA PREPARATION**

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? No**  
**If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

Based upon the above assessment, which has identified a very limited number of minor impacts from the proposed action, an EIS is not required and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of review.

**2. Persons responsible for preparing the EA:**

Rebecca Cooper  
MEPA Coordinator  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
1220 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Helena MT 59620-0701  
406-444-4756

Lee Bastian  
Regional Parks Manager  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, MT 59804-3101  
406-542-5517

**3. Agencies/organizations consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Lands Bureau  
Legal Bureau  
Parks Division  
Wildlife Division

Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism  
Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)  
Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association

**APPENDICES**

- A. HB 495 Checklist
- B. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce

## APPENDIX A

### PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST 23-1-110 MCA

**Date:** March 24, 2009

**Person Reviewing:** Rebecca Cooper

**Project Location:** Travelers' Rest State Park

**Description of Proposed Work:** Lease agreement for Holt heritage museum and associated property.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check ☐ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- . [ ] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?  
Comments: *No*
- . [ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?  
Comments: *No*
- [ ] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?  
Comments: *No*
- [ ] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?  
Comments: *No*
- . [ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?  
Comments: *No*
- . [ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?  
Comments: *No*
- [ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?  
Comments: *No*

- . [ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?  
Comments: *No*
- . [ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?  
Comments: *No*
- [ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?  
Comments: *No*

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

## APPENDIX B

### TOURISM REPORT

#### MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager  
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce  
301 S. Park Ave.  
Helena, MT 59601

**Project Name:** Travelers' Rest State Park, Holt Building Lease

**Project Description:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to engage in a 5-year lease of the heritage museum building and associated land (approx. 3 acres) that is adjacent to Travelers' Rest State Park in Lolo, Montana. The lease of the building would allow FWP to establish a formal visitor center for the park, local administrative offices, and to increase the hours available for the museum's Native American and Cowboy exhibits to be viewed. As part of the lease agreement, FWP would assume management of the museum, which would ensure the exhibits are kept in appropriate conditions to ensure their survival for the enjoyment of future generations.

This state park is nearly encompassed by the residential areas of the City of Lolo. The park provides a suitable habitat for numerous large and small mammals and avian species. Over the past five years, the park received over 17,000 annually. It a popular place for local residents and tourists to enjoy Lolo Creek and visit a documented site visited by the Lewis & Clark expedition.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?  
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?  
NO YES If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve the quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities.

Signature Carol Crockett, Visitor Services Manager Date 4/6/09